



United States Air Force

ONLINE news

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NEWSBYTES

AF & Red Ribbon Week

WASHINGTON — The Air Force is helping to raise drug and alcohol abuse awareness by extending annual Red Ribbon Week observances through the month of October. The annual celebration traditionally runs October 23-31; however, bases across the service are holding events to raise awareness among young people about the effects of drug and alcohol abuse.

Contact the local Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment Program and Demand Reduction Program for more information on Red Ribbon Week activities.

Air Force seeks PAs

The Air Force is taking applications for Physician Assistant (Phase I) training classes beginning Jan. 1, 2001; April 1, 2001; and Aug. 1, 2001.

Only active-duty enlisted Air Force members are eligible for the program.

Completed applications must be sent by military personnel flights and arrive at HQ AFPC/DPAMW, 550 C Street West, Suite 27, Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4729 no later than Jan. 28, 2000.

The selection board is scheduled to convene March 27.

For more information, contact your local military personnel flight. (Courtesy of AFPC News Service)

Comm Squadron board

Senior officers representing the Air Force's communications-information officer career field nominated 142 lieutenant colonels and majors to fill commanders' positions slated to open during the 2000 calendar year.

The list of nominees is available at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil. (Courtesy of AFPC News Service)

AF replaces T-3 flying program



The Air Force is eliminating use of the T-3A Firefly (pictured here) to screen and prepare pilot candidates for Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training.

- *Change expected to maintain acceptable attrition rates, save \$16 million annually*

WASHINGTON — The Air Force is replacing its enhanced flight screening program with commercial training and eliminating use of the T-3A Firefly to screen and prepare pilot candidates for Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training.

An expanded Introductory Flight Training Program that provides pilot candidates Federal Aviation Administration-certified flight instruction through commercial pilot training schools will replace the flight screening program before the end of the year, according to Maj. Gen. William Welser, director of operations, Headquarters Air Education and Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

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Athletic or Air Force uniform?

- **AF seeks win in officer release program**

By Tech. Sgt. Michael E. Spaits
Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON — Air Force athletes with aspirations of turning pro have new guidelines to meet before they can compete outside of a blue uniform.

The stricter policy is aimed at ensuring any moves to release an officer to the world of professional sports is beneficial to the Air Force as well as the athlete.

Secretary of the Air Force, F. Whitten Peters signed the new policy letter Oct. 5 providing guidance to address waivers requested by officers to separate from active duty to pursue a career in a professional sport that receives national publicity.

"Previously, officers that were approved for this sort of separation (waiv-

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South Pole airlift

ANG unit awaits favorable weather before airlift attempt



WASHINGTON — Two ski-equipped LC-130 aircraft assigned to the 109th Airlift Wing, N.Y. Air National Guard, are en route to evacuate a patient based at Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station.

According to Maj. Bob Bullock, spokesman for the 109th AW, the 109th received the

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Letters to the editor

U.S. Air Force Online News publishes letters based on their appeal to an Air Force-wide audience each week. Send your letter to the U.S. Air Force Online News staff by completing the online form at <http://www.af.mil/newspaper/>. Due to the number of letters, not all letters can be published. Letters may be edited for grammar and length. Only letters accompanied by a valid name and email address will be considered.

Talk is one thing

I've made a great realization about those who say, "if you don't like the pay raise then you are in the wrong business." ... they: 1. Don't give their rank or title so I assume they are officers, civilians or 2. Are so far invested in the Air Force that to leave now would be ludicrous. I would believe those who are complaining are mostly airmen ... who want to stay but can't see themselves being like that master sergeant in the office who won't even recommend their child come into the Air Force. ... I don't want to be looking for that 20-year mark like it's a finish line. So many ... say one thing, but if you were to ask them they would not stay a day longer than they have to get their 50 percent.

Senior Airman Jason L. Whitman
Elmendorf AFB, Alaska

A matter of choice

The chief master sergeant with 22 years that disagrees with the fact he makes less than a first lieutenant with three years amazes me. ... I worked very hard to earn and keep my commission. ... I made the choice to work hard in high school and earned a scholarship for my efforts. ... Enlisted are the backbone of the service and granted, aren't always compensated as much as they deserve, but the same can be said of officers. I can make double what I do now on the outside. The choice was his to make.

Jason Mackenzie
Mountain Home AFB, Idaho

Survey provides opportunity to speak up for change

**By Air Force Chief of Staff
Gen. Michael E. Ryan**

If you had the chance to sit down with me and tell me how you'd change the Air Force, what would you say? While I can't meet with all of you, I can offer an alternative that will make your voice heard and include you in a process that will make a difference — the 1999 Chief of Staff Survey.

The theme for this year's CSAF survey is "Speak today, shape tomorrow." By speaking up, you can play a part in changing your Air Force world and shaping tomorrow's. We'll take your responses to this year's survey and compare them to the 1997 survey results to see where things may have improved or where they may have gotten worse. But to get the most accurate picture, I need each of you to participate.

More than 206,000 Air Force officers, enlisted members and civilians took the 1997 survey. That's about a 39 percent return rate. I asked for feedback on why more people didn't take the opportunity to be heard and was surprised by the answers. We found that many people thought the 1997 survey would take too long to complete. Others felt the survey results wouldn't make a difference, and still some didn't participate because they feared their input would not remain anonymous. Let me address each concern and give you my take.

First, the survey should take only about a half-hour to complete and is available on the web at <http://csafsurvey.randolph.af.mil> for easier access. It is also available in versions for local networks and individual paper copies to ensure everyone has a chance to participate.

There were 140 questions in the 1997 survey. This year's survey has 127. Each question was reviewed to be sure commanders; major commands and the air staff get an honest and clear picture of your quality of life and organizational issues.

For those who didn't take the survey because they felt it wouldn't make a difference, know that the entire Air Force

leadership team takes this survey very seriously. So seriously, in fact, we've already put funding into the budget for the next three surveys in 2001, 2003 and 2005.

Indeed, the survey does make a difference. The 1997 survey results helped provide commanders at all levels with valuable information they used to improve their organizations. These improvements ranged from adding additional workout areas and operating hours to a base's fitness center to major projects to improve overall

quality of life and organizational climate. Some improvements focused on leadership communication and team building in the workplace — all key issues identified by the members of those organizations.

The 1997 survey also told us that the post-1986 retirement system — Redux — no longer had the same pull as a retention tool. We took that information to the administration and Congress in 1998 and pushed for a return to the 50 percent retirement system. They listened and the rest is history.

Those concerned about privacy should know we've taken great measures to ensure your anonymity. The whole point of this survey is to allow complete honesty and openness throughout the process. The survey data contains only information related to rank and duty status. Furthermore, the way we'll tabulate the data will also ensure there is no access to individual data by anyone for any reason. The idea is to use overall scores to find out what the real climate is like and to identify major issues across our Air Force.

As we look to the future, we must continue to find ways to make our Air Force better for our people and their families. Clearly, as more people participate in the survey, our view of reality becomes more precise and our ability to make meaningful changes improves significantly. The survey is available through Oct. 29 so there's still plenty of time to participate. I'm counting on all of you to "Speak today, shape tomorrow!"



Take the survey at:
[http://
csafsurvey.randolph.af.mil](http://csafsurvey.randolph.af.mil)



AF replaces T-3

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This decision is expected to maintain acceptable attrition rates for SUPT, save \$16 million a year and capitalize the Air Force's current introductory flight training program in use as a stopgap training measure since October 1998.

The service's T-3 enhanced flight screening program was suspended in July 1997 following a number of uncommanded engine stoppages.

Without the benefit of T-3 flight screening, attrition rates for SUPT climbed above 15 percent. The Air Force considers an 8 to 10 percent attrition rate acceptable.

To reduce the climbing attrition rate and increase pilot production, the service instituted an introductory flight training program in October 1998 that brought attrition down to 8.8 percent.

With the T-3 being almost two years from returning as a screener, the Air Force decided to terminate the program and expand IFT, which has a comparable attrition rate, according to General Welser.

"The real big factor is that it was going to take us about 18 to 24 months to bring the T-3 back online to be able to produce our first pilot candidate," he said. "With the added numbers of people that we're trying to put through pilot training, we just couldn't wait that long."

General Welser said the Air Force's goal with the expanded IFT was to maintain an acceptable attrition rate. "Over the period of time we've been doing IFT vs. the T-3, we're finding the attrition rates within 1 percent of each other," he said. "7.8 percent for the T-3 and 8.8 percent for IFT."

Under the expanded IFT, pilot candidates will receive 50 hours of flying time and earn a private pilot's license. General Welser said this will give pilot candidates confidence, flight experience and a better opportunity to succeed when they enter pilot training.

"We feel anyone who receives a private pilot's license based on FAA requirements will come to us with the right amount of experience and the right amount of confidence to be able to successfully complete our undergraduate pilot training," he said.

More than 150 flight schools nationwide may be involved in the training program, mostly near colleges with Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps detachments.

This article is available in its entirety online.

ONE YEAR LATER

Keiko getting along swimmingly

By Taryn Luntz

Headquarters United States Air Force

WASHINGTON — It's been a little more than a year since the Air Force flew killer whale Keiko, better known as "Free Willy," from an aquarium in Oregon to the coast of his native Iceland.

Keiko has spent the last year living in a bay pen in the Atlantic Ocean while learning to survive in the wild.

He was airlifted to Iceland by the Air Force in September 1998 on a C-17 Globemaster III, a plane chosen for its heavy lift capabilities. It is the only aircraft in the world capable of carrying the almost 81,000 pounds of whale and equipment, refueling in-flight and landing on a short gravel runway in the Westman Islands, Iceland.

The purpose of the mission was to restore Keiko to health and freedom after 20 years in captivity.

Keiko seems to have had little trouble adjusting to his new environment, according to officials from Ocean Futures, the ocean advocacy society supervising the whale's transition to freedom.

Within weeks of arriving at his new home in the bay pen, Ocean Futures reported Keiko was learning how to hunt his own fish, and spending much more time beneath the surface of the water. "We're glad to see that, because that behavior is normal for wild whales," a member of Keiko's animal care staff said.

Keiko's most recent development was learning to swim through a "virtual gateway" that is made of PVC pipe and hangs in the



image by Ocean Futures

Scientists in Iceland watch over Keiko's progress after last year's airlift from Portland, Ore. Keiko has spent the last year living in a bay pen in the Atlantic Ocean while learning to survive in the wild.

center of his pen.

"It is important that Keiko become accustomed to swimming through a gate as he prepares to exit the bay pen for the next major stage of his rehabilitation," an Ocean Futures official said.

This next major stage is his release from the pen into the open bay, and then eventually into the wild. But exactly when Keiko will be released remains to be determined.

This article is available in its entirety online.

Athletic or Air Force uniform?

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ing their remaining active duty service commitment) went into the Individual Ready Reserve," said Lt. Col. Jennifer Hesterman, chief, separation and retirement policy for Air Force deputy chief of staff, personnel. Officers enrolled in the IRR are not required to actively participate with a unit unless recalled by the President in times of crises.

According to Colonel Hesterman, just five officers have been granted miscellaneous separations to pursue professional sports in the past 10 years.

Under the new rules, if approved, the

officer will be required to serve three years in the active Reserves for every one year remaining on their existing active duty service commitment. Successful applicants must actively participate in the Selected Reserves in either the Air Force Reserve or the Air National Guard.

"By requiring officers to stay in the active Reserve, the Air Force obtains meaningful service in exchange for the release," said Colonel Hesterman.

Before even being considered for this waiver, an officer must complete at least two years of active duty commissioned service.

This article is available in its entirety online.



Warrior Week

Training lays foundation for EAF

By Staff Sgt.
Chuck Widener
Air Education and
Training Command
Public Affairs

LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas—Air Force basic trainees are “living it rough” and loving it during the Air Force’s first Warrior Week, a program that creates warrior-oriented airmen and is the foundation for the expeditionary aerospace force.

“This is great,” trainee Michael A. Avellino said of the course, which kicked off here Oct. 1. The 320th Training Squadron Flight 653 dorm chief said he had been looking forward to attending the course since before enlisting in February. He researched Warrior Week on the Web. When he saw the camp was under construction, he said he couldn’t wait to get here.

“I wanted Warrior Week,” he said, “and we’re just lucky enough to fall in on the first graduating class in Air Force history, which makes it really exciting.”

Trainee Irene Kastanas called Warrior Week fun.

“I like it out here,” said the element leader. “Even when I was marching for five miles with my duffel bag, I liked it.”

The two recruits are part of the first group of trainees to officially complete Warrior Week. The group graduated the course Oct. 9 during a ceremony here in which Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Jim Finch spoke about Warrior Week’s significance.



Photo by Robbin Cresswell

Trainees lug their gear at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, in a race to see who can complete the confidence course the quickest. The course is only part of “Warrior Week,” a new addition to Air Force basic training.

have come before you.”

Staff Sgt. James Habeck, a military training instructor, agreed with Chief Finch’s comments and added that Warrior Week “is an eye-opening experience for [trainees]” and that experience is an important part of helping airmen develop a better understanding of the EAF concept.

“The experience alone is what I truly think is the most important part of Warrior Week,” said the five-year instructor. “Right away it sets the tone for what they’re going to encounter after training. All the stuff on top of that — the academic learning and so forth — is just icing on the cake.”

During Warrior Week, trainees experience mobility orientations, tactical briefings and applications, and various team-building exercises.

This article is available in its entirety online.

“This marks the beginning of a necessary transformation of our culture and mindset,” said Chief Finch during the ceremony. “What you, our newest airmen, have learned here is invaluable to you and to those who await your arrival at your first duty station. You’ve gained the basic knowledge and skills to help you understand deployment environments and how you must operate within them. You are by far more prepared for the missions our nation asks of our Air Force than any other group of airmen who

South Pole airlift

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request to airlift Dr. Jerri Nielsen Sept. 29.

The two aircraft departed New York last week and, after several stops, arrived at Christchurch, New Zealand, Oct. 10. The aircraft will proceed to McMurdo Station, a NSF facility that serves as the gateway to the Antarctic interior, to stand by

for favorable weather. One of the aircraft will then fly in to pick up Dr. Nielsen.

Dr. Nielsen discovered a lump in one of her breasts in mid-June. The Air Force parachuted medical supplies to the station in July. However, NSF officials said physicians recently recommended that Dr. Nielsen be returned to the United States.

The onset of summer in Antarctica, with its gradual increase in sunlight and temperature, makes it feasible to evacuate her and to replace her with another physician, according to NSF officials.

Once Dr. Nielsen is on board, the aircraft will return to McMurdo where she will prepare for the return flight to the United States, said NSF officials. The 109th provides logistical support to the U.S. Antarctic Program, which is administered by the NSF. The 109th AW is the only organization in the world that flies the ski-equipped LC-130s, which are the only aircraft capable of landing at the South Pole at this time of year. There are only seven such aircraft in the world, Major Bullock said.



Master Sgt. Joe Butler checks the skis on a specially equipped U.S. Air Force C-130 aircraft prior to departure from Christchurch, New Zealand.



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